

28 Sleep Pills Fell the Wife Of U-2 Pilot

By RICHARD MCGOWAN

Washington, April 20 (NEWS Bureau). — A heavy police contingent tonight guarded the bare hospital room where the wife of U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers lay semi-conscious from an overdose of sleeping pills.

Brunette Barbara Powers, 27, who was reunited with her husband in February after his release from a Russian prison, reportedly was "responding satisfactorily" after



(UPI Telefoto)

Francis Gary Powers and his wife, Barbara, at a party last week.

swallowing 28 nembutal tablets. Her physician, Dr. George Shriner of Georgetown University Hospital, said the flier's wife was in very serious condition when she was admitted to the hospital but was "pulling through."

The hospital reported tonight that her pulse, blood pressure and respiration had improved and that she is "out of danger."

The Powerses have been living in an apartment in nearby Alexandria, Va., since the Central Intelligence Agency pilot's dramatic return from Russia in exchange for Soviet master spy Rudolf Abel.

Taken by Ambulance

Powers was with his wife when she was rushed by ambulance in the pre-dawn hours to Alexandria Hospital.

ferred to Georgetown. Pale and harried-looking, according to witnesses, the pilot stayed at his wife's bedside until 8:30 A.M. and then left.

He could not be reached all day, either by phone or through his office at the CIA.

A CIA spokesman refused to disclose Powers' whereabouts. He said simply that Powers told him

his wife was suffering from "acute indigestion."

However, Washington Police Lt. Nelson Rickey said records at Alexandria Hospital showed that she had taken the 28 pills. Barbara's stomach was pumped before she was transferred to Georgetown Hospital.

A hospital source told THE NEWS that the 28 pills would be

enough to "kill a horse" unless the taker had built up a tolerance to the drug through prior use.

Dr. Charles D. Shields, administrator of the hospital, said Mrs. Powers was being given "diagnostic treatment" aimed at relieving symptoms "of unknown cause," he refused to elaborate except to say that she has suffered in the past from poor kidney function.

The police guard, hospital sources said, was called in to prevent reporters and curiosity-seekers away from Powers' wife.

Her sixth-floor room, in what is called the hospital's "Gold Coast" because it is used primarily for VIPs, is barren and in need of a paint job. The private room was due to be refinished this week. But because of the serious condition of the pilot's wife, hospital authorities rushed her into it.

Went to a Hideaway

Powers and his wife stayed at a secret hideaway for three weeks

after his return to this country. Barbara, the pilot's parents and other members of their families had been present in the bleak Soviet courtroom in August, 1960, when Powers was sentenced to 10 years in prison for flying his spy plane over Russia.

After the pilot completed testimony to the CIA and Congress about his flight, crash and imprisonment, the couple moved into their Alexandria apartment.

Powers is still employed by the CIA although not as a pilot.

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